

# ENGLISH WORDS IN SOUTH SEA LANGUAGES:

HAWAIIAN, MAORI, TAHITIAN, and AUSTRALIAN.

WITH AN INTRODUCTORY ESSAY ON THEIR SIGNIFICANCE.

By FRANK COWAN.

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From the time JOHN BULL, in the singularly appropriate person by name and nature of JOHN OXENHAM, of Plymouth, first entered the world of waters of the Pacific, in 1575, to the present, the English language has been spoken in the hearing of innumerable savage islanders whose powers of vocal imitation approximate those of civilized children. First came those worthy descendants of the Berserkers of the Baltic (not *Bare-Shirters* as some etymologists define the word, but *Sea-searchers* in reality—*Ber* and *Mare* being fingers from the same palm) preying upon the gold-burdened galleons of the Spaniard, like the *pir(Ber)atical DRAKE*, or seeking new lands and new routes in the interest of science and commerce, like the immortal COOK. Then came by scores and hundreds and thousands English and American whalers and merchantmen in a variety of vessels, anchoring at the several islands betimes for water and provisions or to barter with the natives : and here and there leaving a castaway, a deserter, or a beachcomber among the savages as a walking—if not a Walker's dictionary of the language. Then came the evangelists with their families to dwell among the islanders, to preach and teach, and necessarily to impart their language as well as their religion to a certain extent. And finally came the myriad of colonizers to dispossess the native islanders of the fairest of their limited lands—to impose their laws upon them—to employ them as servants and laborers—

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and at all times and in all places to ding into their ears the echoes of Chaucer, the accents of Shakespeare, and that infinity of vocal utterances heard in every quarter of the habitable globe to-day—the Subject's rather than the Queen's English—which is comprehended by the words, the English language.

It is not only possible, accordingly, but highly probable, that English words form a part of almost every language spoken by the South Sea islanders—especially by that expiring race of splendid savages which includes the closely allied Hawaiians, Samoans, Tahitians, and Maoris, or New Zealanders, the remotely related Australians, and those interesting hybrids of the genus *Homo*, the Fijians, among whom the English and English speaking people especially have commingled and exercised an influence ranging from a perceptible degree to absolute dominion; but whether a small or great part is rather, as far as the knowledge of the writer goes, a matter of inference and presumption, than of proof. Similar lists to the following, it is believed, have never been published; though doubtless there is not an English or American resident of a twelvemonth's standing among the natives of Hawaii, New Zealand, or Australia, who could not indite a longer and a more explicit and interesting at a single sitting.

But numbers are not in themselves important: if, indeed, they are not rather a let and hindrance to philosophic or scientific consideration, than a help. The two egg-laying mammals of Australia, the *Ornithorhynchus* and the *Echidna*, are as significant in their approach to the common Reptilian parentage of the Mammals and Birds, as a thousand would be: and their rarity makes them the more remarkable.

It is the observer that gives the significance to the subject. Before a beachcomber in the wilds of New Zealand, a shank-bone lies a bone—a horse's, bullock's, giant's, or—no matter; while before an OWEN, it leaps into a living Moa with an infin-

ity of relationship as well defined as if they were set up in sensuous Cheops-pyramids.

So, however, limited these lists of English words in South Sea languages, it is believed by the writer, that they are not only bones but meat and marrow to the student of Speech and the student of Man. They are pointers, linguistic, racial—each in many directions; and he would be a rash man in his conceited comprehension who would attempt to circumscribe their significance.

At a glance, the names of novelties to the islanders comprise large parts of the longer lists—things of which they had no thoughts before the coming of the wonderful strangers, and had no words of their own to give expression to the new ideas, and adopted the English names accordingly—adapting them at the same time to their racial powers or habits of vocal utterance. Such are *Mortgage*, *Bond*, and *Lawyer*, *Cent*, *Dollar*, and *Bank*, *Bishop*, *Hymnbook*, and *Sabbath*, *Poor Pussy*, *President*, and possibly *Calico*, in the Hawaiian list; and *Bottle*, *Bugler* and *Clock*, *Church*, *School*, and *Organ*, *Powder*, *Pork*, and *Tobacco*, *Wool*, *Store*, and *Sixpence*, etc., in the Maori.

Then, considering the words severally at random—What a lesson in the science of language is contained in the change in form and signification of *Drawknife* among the Maoris? and what striking scenes in South Sea life, contrasting the Savage and the Civilized Man, are depicted in Captain Cook's command "*Go ashore!*" becoming the name of a pot, *Bloody Yankee* becoming the name of the noxious weed dock, and *Tie-up* the name of a fence.

And then to the imaginative—What a tale is told of the Hawaiians in the word *Aloha!* The man-eating monsters of a century ago now a remnant of leprous life, with expiring breath bidding farewell to the world and their destroyer with his own word *Love!* If ever the lamb licked the butcher's hand, the

fact is recorded in the word *Aloha*.

Or, to the more humorous than sentimental—What a grotesque transformation is that of English *Windmill* through the larval stage of Australian *Wulla-Mulla* to the geographic imago of Sydney to-day Woo'lloomooloo'! The metamorphosis of English fly-boat into filibuster, so frequently cited in illustration of the changes in form and signification possible to words, may be as extreme but certainly is not nearly so fantastic.

Then the phonetic changes, the expression of the strange racial environment in which “the words that wise Bacon or brave Raleigh spoke” found themselves in the jaws of the South Sea cannibals! Imagine the Clydesdale horse and the Durham ox of old England mongrelized among the zebras of South Africa and the hideous water-buffaloes of India. So those evanescent and ethereal compounds of sound and sense, the words of the English people, have undergone in the South Sea languages a series of changes as certain and determinable as if they were organisms of flesh and blood as well as the horse and ox.

But enough. Howsoever small the following lists, they are subject for a library of literature in the expression of their significance in the infinite ramifications of thought. In fine and in fact, were every other trace of the Polynesians to vanish—were they to become a forgotten thing of the past even more vague and intangible than the long extinct Diprotodon and Thylacoleo of Australia, yet it would be possible from these few words to restore in great measure the race and the history of its annihilation: and as well the annihilating race, its progress in the march of enlightenment, and its divers inheritances from a remoter past, notably from the Greeks in such words as *Bishop*, *Church*, *Organ*, *Hymn* and *School*; the Romans, in such words as *Missionary*, *Colonel*, *Governor*, *Master*, and the like; the Jews in such words as *Sabbath*; and that grand breed of Man from the shores of the Baltic that bids fair to dominate the world at no

distant day, the worshipers of Wodin, (Odin, or God,) and Thor, in such words as *Wednesday* and *Thursday*.

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## ENGLISH WORDS IN THE HAWAIIAN.

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In pronouncing the following English words in their South Sea forms, the vowels are given the sounds of the Italian, and every vowel represents a syllable. Moreover, every vowel in apparent diphthongs is sounded more or less distinctly by the natives, howsoever slurred by the English and Americans.

**APRIL, Aperila.**

**ARITHMETIC, Aramatica.**

**BANK, Baneko.**

**BISHOP, Bihopa.**

**BOND, Bona.**

**BOOK, Buke.**

**CALICO, Ho'luku.** This is doubtful, albeit vouched for by an English resident. The Ho'luku is the common dress worn by a Hawaiian woman since the introduction of Christianity and clothing. In shape it is a chemise; and its origin is accounted for by the tradition that the wives of the first missionaries, having exhausted their store of gowns to cover the nakedness of their female converts, distributed their sarks as well in the excess of their zeal and charity, and these requiring less material and being simpler in pattern and more suitable to the climate than the gowns, became the fashion—the survival of the fittest: the name Calico passing from the gowns of that material to the sarks and their successors *ad infinitum*.

**CASTLE, Kakela.**

**CENT, Kene'ta.**

**CHARLES, Kali.**

**CLARA, Kalala.**

**CLARENCE, Kalalena.**

**CLARK, Kalaka.**

**DENMARK, Denemaka.**

**DOCTOR, Kauka.**

**DOLLAR, Dala.**

GEORGE MCFARLANE, a Senator in the good old days of King Kalakaua, **Keo'ka Mukapolena.**

GIBSON, **Kipikona.**

GOLD, **Gula.**

HEBDOMIDAL, **Hebedoma.**

HUNDRED, **Haneri.**

HYMN-BOOK, **Buke-hi'meni.**

LAWYER, **Lo'io.**

LIEUTENANT, **Lutanelia.**

LOVE, **Aloha.** This is asserted by some, and denied by others; but the circumstances are all in favor of an English origin of the word and a Missionary invention of the celebrated salutation of the Paradise of the Pacific, **Aloha.**

The word *aloha*, in foreign use, has taken the place of every English equivalent. It is a greeting, a farewell, thanks, love, goodwill. *Aloha* looks at you from tides and illuminations, it meets you on the roads and at house-doors, it is conveyed to you in letters, the air is full of it. "My *aloha* to you," "he sends you his *aloha*," "they desire their *aloha*." It already represents to me all of kindness and good will that language can express, and the convenience of it as compared with other phrases is, that it means exactly what the receiver understands it to mean, and consequently, in all cases can be conveyed by a third person.—*Isabella L. Bird: The Hawaiian Archipelago*, p. 68.

"*Aloha*" means "Love to you!" It is the Hawaiian salutation and farewell. It expresses both the joy of friends who meet, and the sorrow of those who part. It is the commonest and sweetest word in the Hawaiian tongue.—*George Leonard Chaney: Aloha! a Hawaiian Salutation, Preface.*

MARRY, **Marei'a.**

MORTGAGE, **Mo'rake.**

MY DEAR, **Mai Kia.**

OWNER OF MILLIONS, the familiar sobriquet of the wealthy Claus Spreckles among the Hawaiians, **Ona Miliona.**

POOR PUSSY, **Pupu'ki.** A name adopted by the natives for the cat, a mammal unknown to them before the arrival of Cook.

PRESIDENT, **Peresidena.**

SABBATH, **Sabati.**

SAMUEL, **Kamuela.**

THOUSAND, **Tausani.**

**VIRGIN, Vilikini.**  
**WILLIAM, Uilama.**

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## ENGLISH WORDS IN THE MAORI.

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**BAKER, Peka.** The name given to an oven.

**BISHOP, Pikopo.** The common name for a Roman Catholic.

**BLACK FELLOW, Paraki wara.** (Rev. Rich. Taylor, p. 18). Cf. this **wara** with Bengali **Wallah** and English **Fellow**.

**BLOODY YANKEE, Buri Angki.** The name commonly given the noxious weed dock in remembrance of a detestable fraud practiced on the ignorant natives of the olden time by a Yankee skipper who sold them dock for tobacco seed and polluted the country accordingly with the vile weed. Happily for the good name of the Yankee abroad to-day, the rascally skipper is said to have been in reality not an American but an Englishman; and **Buri Angki** is Maori-ized Bloody English and not Bloody Yankee.

The common dock is also widely disseminated, and will, I fear, forever remain a proof of the rascality of an Englishman, who sold the seed for those of the tobacco plant.—*Charles Darwin: Voyage of a Naturalist*, ii. 211.

**BOOK, Puka-puka.** Like many savage peoples, the Maoris are fond of duplications. Nor are the enlightened English and Americans exempt from the practice, as long as Teetotaler and Too-too (in the form of Dude,) are found in their daily speech.

**BOTTLE, Pa'tara.**

**BOX, Pouaka.**

**BROOM, Puru'ma.**

**BROUGHTON, Paratene.**

**BUGLER, Pukera.**

**CANDLE, Kanara.**

**CHURCH, Karakia.**

**CLOCK, Karaka.**

**COLONEL, Kanara.**

**COLOR, Kara.**

Cook, (Captain James,) **Toki.** This is preserved in a common name for rum, which Captain Cook first gave to the natives of New Zealand, and is now applied proverbially to anything sweet: *Te wai Toki i te rangi:* Cook's water from heaven.

### DAVID, **Rewiri.**

**DRAWKNIFE, Toronaihi.** The evolution of this word is very interesting and should be constantly before the eyes of the etymologist tracing resemblances between the words of languages spoken by two peoples having any intercourse whatever. It is contained in the following paragraph :—

"There is one word admitted into our translation of the Testament [into the Maori language] which it is doubtful whether the translators, though the best Maori scholars, ever suspected was anything but a genuine Maori one, and that is *toronaihi*, a sickle. Wondering what this *toronaihi* could be originally, as they had nothing like a sickle, or anything sharper than a green-stone adze, or hatchet, I put the question to an intelligent native, who laughed, and said, 'Why, don't you know, it is one of your own words?' I expressed my ignorance. He said, that the *toronaihi* is the sharp knife which whalers use to cut up blubber with—the *drawknife*. The word has been naturalized perhaps for half a century ; and since that little destructive animal, the mouse, has so increased, as to become a pest, for it cuts down the ripened wheat with its sharp teeth, and so clean, that it almost appears to have been done with a knife; the natives have bestowed upon it the name of *toronaihi*, as being most descriptive of its destructive powers."—*Rev. Richard Taylor: Te Ika a Maui*, p. 402.

**ENGLAND, Ingarani.** The name the noted Hori Kingi gave his new house, to show his friendship for the English people.

### FINISH, **Pini.**

### FRANK, **Parangka.**

**GEORGE DIDSBURY,** the Government printer, **Hoei Titipere.**

**GO ASHORE, Ko'hua.** The name of a pot. The origin of this curious appellation illustrates strikingly the mimicry of the Maoris. Captain Cook, on one occasion, aboard his ship, having given the savages a pot, accompanied it repeatedly with the words, "Go ashore." The savages, however, mistaking the

command for the name of the vessel, applied it to the pot and have continued to do so to this day.

**GOVERNOR, Kawana.**

HAZARD, the surname of the ill-fated teacher of the Maoris at Wairoa, New Zealand, destroyed, with several of his family, by the eruption of Tarawera on the 10th of June, 1886, (and to whom the writer is indebted for a number of these Maori-ized words,) **Ha'tata.**

**HORSE, Ho'ihō.**

JOHN WHITE, the Pakeha Maori, the author of several treatises on the natives of New Zealand, (and to whom also the writer is indebted for several words in this list,) **Hone Waiti.**

KING WILLIAM, **Kingi Wiremu.** (Taylor, p. 328.)

LOAF, **Rohi.** A name also given to bread.

LOVE, **Arofa**, or **Aroha.**

MASTER, **Mahite'ra.**

MATRAVERS, **Matera'wa.**

MINERVA, **Miniri'wa.**

MISSIONARY, **Mihana'ri.** The name given a Protestant convert in contradistinction to a **Pikopo**, or Roman Catholic.

MONDAY, **Manei.**

NEEDLE, **Nira.**

ORGAN, **O'kana.**

POOR FELLOW, **Pohe'ra.**

PORK, **Poaka.** The name also given to the pig. Possibly derived from the Spanish. See *infra*.

POWDER, **Paura.**

PUSSY, **Poti.**

QUEEN, **Kuini.**

RACHEL, **Rahera.**

RANOLF, the English hero of Alfred Domett's romance of New Zealand—or, dream of two lives, as he styles it—**Rano'ra**, in the language of the idyllic Maori heroine, Amohi'a :

Her simple story told, the Maid  
Asked in her turn the Wanderer's name ;  
Tried to pronounce it too ; but still  
With pretty looks of mock distress

And scorn at her own want of skill,  
 And tempting twisting lips no stain  
 Of tattoo had turned azure—found  
*Ranolf* too strange and harsh a sound  
 For her harmonious speech to frame ;  
 So after various efforts vain  
*Rano'ra* it at last became,  
 The nearest imitation plain  
 Her liquid accents could attain.—B. ii. c. i.

**SAMUEL, Hamio'ri.**

**SARA, Hera.**

**SCHOOL, Kura.**

**SCOTT, Kooti.** Te Kooti, or The Scott, was the name of one of the most famous of the native warriors of New Zealand.

**SHAWL, Ho'ara.**

**SHOE, Hu.**

**SHOT, Hota.**

**SIXPENCE, Hikipene.** Also the Maori nickname for a Lieutenant Governor : his minimum of authority and power being on a par with the value of the smallest of English coins known to the natives.

**SLATE, Tare'ti.**

**SOPHIA, Topæ'a, and Apæ'a.**

**STOOL, Tura.**

**STORE, Toa.**

**SUSAN, Tuiha'na.**

**TABLE, Tepu and Te'para.**

**TAYLOR, Teira, and Nera.** See WILLIAM TAYLOR, *infra*.

**TEA-CUP, Ti-kapa.**

**TEA-KETTLE, Ti-kera.**

**TEA-POT, Ti-pota.**

**TIE-UP, Tai-ep-a.** The name of a fence because, in the first fence made by Europeans in the sight of the natives, the rails were tied up to the posts, and constituted accordingly a Tie-up-a.

**TOBACCO, Tupeka.**

**TWO-BARRELED, Tu-para.** A double-barreled gun.

**TUESDAY, Turei.**

**THURSDAY, Tairei.**

**VICTORIA THE QUEEN, Wikitoria te Kuini.**

**WEEK, Wiki.** The name of Sunday : in connection with which the following paragraph from the worthy Taylor may be read with profit by the student of language :—

“Since the introduction of Christianity, the natives have given particular names to three of the week days, which are now generally used throughout the country. According to their nomenclature, Sunday is called *Te Wiki*, the week, most probably because it commences with that day, which thus, by way of distinction, is designated the week. Saturday is named *Te ra horoi*, or the washing and cleaning-up day, from their noticing the custom in all European houses of thus employing that day. Friday is called *Te ra oka*, or the bleeding day. It was a long time before I could discover the origin of this name, but found that it is derived from the European custom of killing their pigs on the Friday, so as to have time to cut them up on the Saturday, and dispose of them before the Sabbath. The custom of bleeding animals, which is or ought to be general amongst us as Christians, struck the natives with the greatest astonishment, that the blood which they esteem so highly, should thus be wasted : they have therefore commemorated the circumstance by giving the name of *Te ra oka*, to this pig-killing day. The remaining days of the week still preserve their naturalized names, viz., *Manei*, *Turei*, *Wenerei*, *Tairei*.”—*Te Ika a Maui*, p. 365.

#### WEDNESDAY, **Wenerei.**

WELLINGTON, the capital of New Zealand, **Werengitani.**

WILLIAM TAYLOR, the adopted name of the celebrated Waikato chief, **Wiremu Nera.**

#### WINDOW, **Wini.**

#### WOOL, **Wuru.**

NOTE.—Several Spanish words similarly have been adopted and adapted to their organs of speech by the Maoris : BUQUE, a Spanish word for ship, is the second and third syllables of the Maori word for the same, **Kai-puke**—*kai* meaning to eat, or live—*kai-puke*, ship for living or dwelling in ; PERRO, a dog, is **Pero**, the same in the Maori tongue ; and PORCO, a pig or pork, is **Poaka**, as above ; and, curiously, the French OUI.

meaning yes, is found in the Maori name for a Frenchman, **Wi-wi**, that is, the one who says *Wi, wi* so frequently.

### ENGLISH WORDS IN THE TAHITIAN.

BANKS, Sir Joseph, the president of the Royal Society for nearly fifty years, who accompanied the expedition under the command of Captain Cook as a naturalist, **Tapani** and **Opani**.

BRITAIN, **Beritani**.

COOK, the great commander, **Tuti**.

HICKS, the first lieutenant of Captain Cook, **Hiti**.

HYMN, **Hi'meni**. And while the word is lengthened in sound it is extended in signification, from hymn, to singing in general, including the choruses of congratulation so frequently referred to by travelers, and to all kinds of native songs.

KING GEORGE, **Kihargo**.

SOLANDER, the favorite pupil of Linnæus, and the distinguished botanist of Cook's expedition, **Torano**.

### ENGLISH WORDS IN THE AUSTRALIAN.

BUCKET, **Buk'eti**. In the language of the Aborigines of Cooper's Creek which has no *s* and terminates all words with a vowel.

CAPE HOWE, **Gabo**. And, curiously, the identity of Cape Howe and Gabo having been forgotten by the shifting Colonists, there is now a Gabo Island on the coast hard by to puzzle the etymologist of the future.

MUSKET, **Muk'eti**. In the language of the Aborigines of Cooper's Creek.

WINDMILL, **Wulla-mulla**. This, in the course of time passing from the Blacks to the Whites, as the name of a site of a forgotten windmill in the neighborhood of Sydney, is now the name of a division of the Empire City of the Golden South, **Woo'llooomooloo'**, accented on the first and last syllable: perhaps the most monstrous of names to be found in any of the English cities of the globe.